



The Weathervane

Summer

A Quarterly for and from West Gardiner

2022



Happy Retirement, Mrs. Goggin!

Patricia "Pat" Goggin— Helen A. Thompson School.

I am a West Gardiner native and have lived here most of my life. I went to the West Gardiner Central School (now the Helen A. Thompson School) until the 8th grade. My 8th grade year was the year the 7th and 8th grade students were sent in town to Gardiner. I graduated from Gardiner Area High School and went to Thomas College and the Augusta School of Business. I married my high school sweetheart when he came home from Vietnam, and we have been married for 53 years. Our two girls went to school here at Helen A. Thompson School and my three grandchildren went here as well.

When I asked Pat to give me some input for the Weathervane, I found it hard to believe that she would be retiring from Helen A. Thompson School. I have known Pat and Donnie Goggin since the 60s. They are a wonderful couple. Our oldest daughters graduated from GAHS together. I could not edit what Pat has written. It comes from her heart. Pat will be sincerely missed by the students, parents, staff, and residents of West Gardiner. I am glad that she will be volunteering at HTS and I hope to see her at future Peter Pan Fairs. Thank you, Pat, for all you have done for the children, parents, staff, and residents of West Gardiner. We are truly blessed to have had you at HTS for all these years.
Debra Couture

Before coming to M.S.A.D. #11, I worked as a secretary for the Bureau of Rehabilitation in Augusta. Then I decided to take a job closer to my home. My first job with M.S.A.D. #11 was secretary to Merle Peacock Jr., Superintendent. My second job was the Maine Studies Curriculum Project which was based at the Gardiner Regional Middle School. This project developed a Maine curriculum that was implemented in Maine schools. Then, at the beginning of September of 1982, I started working at the Helen A. Thompson School. It was part time at first; but as years passed, it quickly became full time. I was on the building committee for the new Helen A. Thompson School which was built in 1996. It was amazing to see the school being built inside and outside. I can remember the gym and cafeteria area as one big open space with a dirt floor.

One of my favorite events at our school was the Peter Pan Fair which I attended when I went to school here. I volunteered in the Plant Room for 35 years and loved it. I looked forward to the fair every year and seeing the children, parents, and grandparents come. Our 5th Grade Celebration was one of my favorites as well. I enjoyed getting all the certificates ready and decorating the gym; but most of all, I loved watching the ceremonies knowing that it was probably the last time I would see some of them. Then, after many years, some of our former students would come back to enroll their own children. Some of our former students came back and are now working here.

I have worked here for almost 40 years and have worked for nine different principals. I will miss seeing the students, their parents, and especially the staff who have been like my family to me. I have no specific retirement plans except for sleeping in. I would like to visit family out of state sometime. Also, I will probably volunteer here at HTS while my youngest grandson is still here. I am going to miss my job here very much. It will be hard to leave after all these years.



"The Flash"- a red eared slider who resides on the west banks of Cobbossee Stream, about 1/4 mile from the boat launch on Collins Mills. He dreams of flying while sunning on high stumps.

Photo by El Costell

From the Porch Mike Wing

When winter gradually lets go its grip on the yard, when the peepers chirp you to sleep, when we can see buds on the maples, a woodchuck stirs in his hibernation. That's about the same time the hostas sprout their shoots and irises break through the top soil. Being a true hibernator, he hasn't tasted greenery in months, and our gardens are a smorgasbord.

The woodchuck is a versatile rodent, a burrowing machine, swimmer, tree climber, and a voracious eater, mostly plant life but taking an insect or worm now and then. If you see him scurrying across to garden, make a plan. You can buy a "Have-a-Heart" trap and transplant him over to some enemy's yard, you can find the entrance to his den and flood or smoke him out, or you can shoot him. The woodchuck is edible, as tasty as squirrel and beaver I've heard. Yum. My conscience relaxes when a critter is destroying our property and hard work. We start by discouraging, but they can be hunted year round.

We have a den across the road where they seem to reside in a warren of tunnels. Using all four feet with four clawed toes up front and five behind, the breeding rodent can move some serious soil for a den. There, the female will birth a litter of chucklings, two to six, and raise them until they can see and have hair. Then it's out to the flower beds and veggie gardens. We scared them off by yelling. They came back. My dog cornered one once and lost the snarling contest.

Every animal plays a role in the grand scheme of Nature. Groundhogs turn the soil and feed predators. We turn the soil and feed woodchucks. We are looking for a recipe for woodchuck.

A Head Start On The Future Ava Goraj- GAHS Student Writer

High school can be a stressful time for students; however, college may be deemed as terrifying. A new school, new classmates, and knowing that you are working towards a new career can be overwhelming. However, there are ways to get a head start on this period of life. Throughout my high school years, I have taken Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses, for which I have received college credits. On top of taking advantage of these courses that the high school offers, I have also participated in the Early College Program. This amazing service allows high school students to take online courses from any University of Maine System school. Since my sophomore year, I have completed three online courses from UMPI, UMM, and UMA. I am currently enrolled in my fourth course through UMF, and once this class is finished, I will have 13 college credits from the Early College Program alone. Now, you may be wondering why this is important, so let me put it into perspective. A college semester consists of 15 credit hours, and combining the high school and college courses I have taken, I will be graduating from GAHS with 20-30 college credits. Of course, I will have to take several more classes that are specific to my degree in college, but due to the credits that I already have obtained, there is a solid chance that I will be able to graduate from college early. I would recommend the Early College Program to any high school student, even if they do not know what they wish to study. This resource hosts a variety of different courses that are free, and it is an excellent way for students to get a head start on the next chapter of their lives.



Mikayla and her dog, Solo, fishing on Cobbossee stream.

Photo Mikayla Eldridge

***Voting will be held
June 14, 2022 at the
fire station from 8-8.
This is for State Pri-
mary and our
MSAD#11 Budget
Referendum***

Announcements and What's Happening Around Town.

Thank you West Gardiner Citizens

Just wanted to say "Thank you" to the registered voters of West Gardiner who came out and voted at the Annual Town Meeting which was held on Saturday April 9th, 2022. There were approximately 225 ballots cast for the Select Board and School Board positions. At the Business Meeting, all 59 articles were passed by the registered voters of West Gardiner who were in attendance. It's the small things that make the biggest difference for our great Town. -Angela Phillis, Town Clerk

West Gardiner Historical Society

On 4/9/22, voters at the Town Meeting approved the warrant to begin the construction of the West Gardiner Historical Society (WGHS) building. The amount that was approved was \$120,000. That amount, combined with some funding from last year, will allow the WGHS to clear the lot, complete a concrete slab, connect the water and sewer to the foundation and begin construction of a building. At the April meeting, members discussed the dimensions of and the materials for the building. Members agreed that a wooden building would be a better choice for a historical society building. The next WGHS meeting will be on June 15 at 7 PM at the Auxiliary Hall. All are invited to attend.

West Gardiner Garden Club

For information on summer meeting dates and times, please contact Charlene McFarland at 582-7239. Beginning in October, the Garden Club meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month. The October meeting will be held on Wednesday, 10/05/22 at 6:30 PM at the Auxiliary Hall.

Open House

Saturday, June 18 from 1-4 p.m. at 1043 High Street in West Gardiner, Gold Star Honeybees and Run Amok Mead invite our neighbors to stop by for a sneak preview of what will soon be Maine's newest meadery/tasting room/event venue! Meadery tours, barn visits, cornhole and croquet. Come say "Hey!" More information at 207-466-2142 or runamokmead@gmail.com

Dubbin' Around With Mert *Susan Emmet*

In the early 80's when single women were finally able to borrow money for a house, I found an old cape with a saggy barn out back in North Monmouth. I bought it for \$34,000. It needed a huge amount of work, but the first thing I needed was wood for the old furnace in the dirt cellar. I'd worked with Mert when he was on the school board and I was a negotiator for the Teachers' Association. I asked Mert to deliver 8 cords of wood. I think Gary and Ron helped him deliver, cut and stack the wood. I hired students to help me run it down into the cellar. I was several years into teaching English at the high school.

Flash ahead closer to now. Mert and I remained friends although I can't think of two people whose politics and lives were more opposite. We could talk though – about anything – clearly and respectfully. When Mike and I moved to West Gardiner in 1999 we worked on the grounds of our new house, planting crabapple, horse chestnut, dogwood and rescuing neglected apple trees. Trees grounded us as they did Mert.

My favorite memories though center on the years of working on *The Weathervane*. Mert (and sometimes Julie) would come to our new little house on Cold Creek Drive and chat. I'd get out the laptop, he'd grab his handwritten notes and dictate his stories. I'd type them up exactly as he spoke the words, trying to capture his voice and intonation. He always talked about West Gardiner history, too – people, schools, events, how things had changed. Mert was a human encyclopedia of our town. And if he came by and we weren't home, he'd turn the porch chair sideways to signal his presence. Every day when I come home, I check the porch for chair movement. I think I always will. It's a blessing to keep him close to heart.



Julia Hickey and her large joined family want to express their gratitude to all the people of West Gardiner for their outpouring of respect and love for Mert. We also want you to join us on July 3, 2022 at 1 p.m. at the Hickey home for a memorial honoring Mert's life. The corn won't be ready, but if you'd like to bring a salad or dessert, that would be welcome, just like in the past.



Wayside Chapel 3 West Road

Wayside Chapel was originally built in 1805. The original church burned down in the 1840s. The main structure, as it exists today, was built in 1850. The additional "L" section of the church was built about 40 years ago. Donna McGibney is the pastor at Wayside Chapel. Church Services are on Sundays at 11 AM. Men's Bible study is on Sundays at 5 PM; Women's Bible Study is on Mondays at 6 PM; and the Prayer and Planning Group meets from 6:30 to 8 PM on Tuesday evenings.

First Baptist Church of West Gardiner 658 Hallowell-Litchfield Road



As the story is told, in 1820, the First Baptist Church of Hallowell decided to put in new pews in their church. They gave the old pews to some parishioners in West Gardiner to sell. The pews were sold for about \$1000, and the parishioners built the First Baptist Church of West Gardiner with that \$1000. There was about \$36 left of the \$1000 after the church was completed in 1821. The addition to the back of the church was built about 40 years ago. John Clark is the pastor at the First Baptist Church of West Gardiner. Sunday School is at 9 AM; Worship Service is at 10:30 AM; and the Wednesday Prayer Meeting and Bible Study is at 6:30 PM.

Grace Community Chapel 187 Lewiston Road

Grace Community Chapel is located very close to the Interstate exit on Rt. 126 in West Gardiner. Jeremy Hawkins is the Pastor of Grace Community Chapel. Sunday Worship Service is at 9:30 AM; Teen Ministry is on Mondays at 6:30 PM; and Bible Study is on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. For more information, their website is www.GCChapel.com and the telephone number is 207-582-7145.



Helen Thompson School Update by Kady Gould

Things sure have changed at school over the past few months! After restructuring school wide routines to keep everyone safe during the pandemic, we have been able to shift back toward some of the regular routines that we know. Students are now eating lunch all together in the cafeteria and parents are coming into the building for end-of-day dismissal each day. This spring we were able to resume in person parent-teacher conferences and we hosted music concerts for our K-5 students. As expected, the gym was packed with families and support for our proud performers!

The last day of school on June 16th is approaching quickly and at the end of the school year, we will say goodbye to some of our valued colleagues. Juliet Shagoury, Gr. 1 teacher, will take a one year leave of absence and we will hire a teacher for first grade next year. Joan Tourtelotte, School Counselor, will be leaving as the elementary school guidance program shifts to a social work model. Teachers will continue to teach core social-emotional lessons in class each week. Pat Goggin, Administrative Assistant, is retiring after nearly 40 years! Pat holds a historical record of Helen Thompson School and has been dedicated to the students and staff. Her contributions over the years are immeasurable, and it is hard to imagine our main office without Pat who is relied upon for countless tasks every day!

Our students are completing district and state testing over the month of May. They have been setting goals and working hard, and early data shows strong strides in the areas of Literacy and Math. We are planning special end of year events including a celebration for our 5th grade students moving on to middle school, field day, and a PTA-sponsored school dance. It has been a joy to plan these events for our students and we look forward to the fun ahead!

As always, thank you to our school community for the continuous and generous support.



Joshua Rollson holding a fresh loaf of his artisan bread. *"Bread, it's a simple pleasure, why complicate it,"* words from local baker Joshua Rollson from Stone Broke Bread. For more information you can go to the StoneBrokeBread.com

Photo by El Costell



Charlene McFarland-master gardener shares plants from her garden in her annual perennial sale. Hope tulips given to the garden club by Johnny's Select Seeds, bloom orange and then fade to pink.

Charlene's Hope Tulips—photo by El Costell

Tucker Farm - Hallowell-Litchfield Road
Pat Savage carefully labeling her organically grown seedlings which she offers for sale in the spring, helping create beautiful gardens all summer.

Photos by El Costell



WEST GARDINER NEWSLETTER

The Weathervane

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PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
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LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

The Weathervane is a non-profit quarterly informational newsletter intended to be unbiased, non-denominational, non-partisan, accurate, and enjoyable.

Schedules of town events, organizations and activities as well as local businesses will be listed in the spring issues.

The Weathervane welcomes story ideas from our readers.

Call 441-9752 or write coleneoneill1@gmail.com